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The Honorable Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W. Room 8-C453
Washington, D.C. 20554

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JAN 17 2002

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Commissioner Powell:

I am writing to you concerning the proposed merger between EchoStar and DirecTV, which has recently come before the Federal Communications Commission.

As you are well aware, in many rural areas, satellite television is the only method by which persons can receive quality television service. Many of these areas do not have access to the traditional cable infrastructure. While the EchoStar and DirecTV merger may well provide a strong competition to the cable industry in areas where consumers have the choice between services, it is imperative that whatever agreement is reached provides protections for those satellite subscribers who do not have access to cable and/or receive inadequate over-the-air network broadcast signals.

I implore you and other members of the Commission to remember the unique needs of rural America as you deliberate on this critical issue. As always, I stand ready to work with you on this and other matters.

Very truly yours,

Tom Udall
Member of Congress

TSU/gll

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